The Anxiety of Diagnosis

Kristin Hultgren, LCPC
agenda

INTRODUCTION
OVERVIEW OF ANXIETY
WHEN & WHERE
IMPACT
MANAGEMENT
ADVOCATE
SUMMARY
introduction

Corporate marketing and music promotion

Professional mental health journey

Diagnosis

Merging professional passion with need

Mission
overview of anxiety
JILL BOLTE TAYLOR

“Please take responsibility for the energy you bring into this space.”
what it looks like

- Flushed cheeks
- Rash
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Pain or tightness that impacts movement
- Dizziness
what it feels like

Difficulty concentrating
Digestive upset
Headache
Anger and/or irritability
Overwhelm
Fatigue
what could be happening cognitively

- Catastrophizing
- Desire to control people or events
- Overthinking
- Overplanning
- Creating ways to avoid people or events
- Unrealistic expectations
when & where
asking for help

CAN INCREASE ANXIETY
- Perception of others
- Loss of control
- Unsatisfactory outcomes

IMPACT IDENTITY
- Capabilities
- Invalidated
- Expert status

QUESTION WORTH
- Difficult
- Failure
- Care partner frustration
impact
quality of our days

- Thought-feeling-behavior chain
- Maladaptive coping mechanisms
- Decrease in emotional wellness
- Create problematic patterns
- Externalize and blame
relationships

- Feeling unseen and unheard
- Setting new boundaries
- Conditional or transactional
- Isolating
- Loss
management
# Specific Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>No ‘dear diary’ needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breathing</td>
<td>Slow heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talisman</td>
<td>Muscle memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Star Search</td>
<td>Sing it out loud from memory</td>
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<td>Handout</td>
<td>Anxiety thermometer</td>
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specific exercises continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACT CHECK</th>
<th>keep asking questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>MOVEMENT</td>
<td>dancing counts</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCOMFORT</td>
<td>build this muscle in small doses</td>
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<tr>
<td>REFRAMING</td>
<td>change those thoughts</td>
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2023 The Anxiety of Diagnosis
advocate
“You’re the leader of the team taking care of you. That means asking as many questions as are needed to make sure you understand what is being discussed.”

DR CARL STREED JR MD MPH
we are experts too

• Make a list
• Take notes
• Ask questions or for clarification
• Request change in volume
• Get another opinion
• Seek additional information or time to process prior to making decision
perception

- Diagnosis does not mean ‘less than’
- Asking questions does not mean ‘stupid’
- Requesting quality care provided respectfully does not mean ‘problem child’
- Specialist does not mean ‘infallible’
Experiencing anxiety upon diagnosis is okay

Learn what it looks and feels like for you

Experiment and discover what works for various levels of anxiety

Believe in your worth and value
thank you

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